

Pastor Daryl Diddle

Sermon Series: *Now, Wait Just a Minute, No. 1*

Kairos and Chronos

April 24, 2022

John 14:1-14 (NLT)

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going."

⁵ "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

⁹ Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

¹² "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!"

We are in the book of John today, if you'd turn there with me. John, Chapter 14.

Wait!

This morning...I'm beginning a series...on some things the Bible says...about...waiting...which is something...that our society...does very...poorly.

You see, just that little bit of waiting—just that little bit of sitting in silence and wondering what's coming next—has absolutely driven some of you crazy, hasn't it?

And you're far from alone. We are not good waiters. We're not really wired to wait—at least not anymore.

Ever since the fall of Eden, we have struggled with waiting—increasingly so as time has passed, and this is why: the fall caused our focus and attentions to turn inward toward us—toward what we want for ourselves. And, of course, the more we want what we want, the quicker we want it. And the quicker we want it, the less we're willing to wait.

And, of course, our culture has so completely bought into this. We're actually immersed in a world that is vying for our dollars by promising us that we won't have to wait for anything—anything we want.

I've seen gas stations advertise, "We have the fastest pumps in town."

More and more places have multiple drive through lanes.

Express pay options.

You pay extra for Amazon Prime, so you get things you order from across the county on the very next day.

Call in your grocery order, and an employee will fill it and then bring it to your car within a minute of your arrival.

On and on it goes—all so we don't have to wait.

In *fact*, over the past few decades, we've gotten so *used* to getting things so *quickly*, we're now very *frustrated* by the delays caused by today's supply chain issues. All of this COVID/worker shortage stuff has pushed us back, in some areas, into a posture of waiting that our nation hasn't experienced for fifty years.

For example, fifty years ago, if you wanted to buy a chair or a couch—a sofa, you went to a furniture store, you picked the style and the fabric and maybe the wood you wanted, and you paid for it. And then in a few *months*, your couch was delivered.

Fifty years ago, if you wanted a new car, you went to the dealer, filled out an order form and in a few months, the dealer would call you and tell you your car is ready for you to pick up.

This whole virus/supply chain business has brought us back around, in those areas and in many others, to once again having to wait for things to, if not to be manufactured, then at least to arrive in our stores.

And, let's be honest.

We...don't...like...it!

Because we don't like to wait.

But of course, our disdain for waiting is not just about shopping. It spills over into other parts of life too.

For example, you and I tend to become impatient with people when they don't answer our call or text or message right away. When that happens, how often do we respond in ways we should not?"

And so, this *cultural and spiritual impatience* affects our relationships.

It affects the way we think too, because, when you combine our impatience with the technology we have available, we have all but given up the practice of wondering, of considering, of pondering.

I'd bet there are a good number of people right here who don't even know what that word "pondering" means, as in "to ponder something."

And that's because if we don't know an answer to a question, we no longer have to think about it ourselves to try to figure it out. We no longer have to wonder. Instead, we go immediately to the internet, and we find an answer.

Now, the fact is that the answer we find may or may not be a good answer or the right answer, but, more often than not, we take it and move on. And this is dangerous because our *impatience* may *then* cause us to be incorrect and misinformed in the short term.

But it's even more dangerous over the long term, because our impatience can cause our thinking to be shaped simply by whatever online information source has paid the money required to be the first response to our Google question, you see?

So, the *whole way* we think as well as *how deeply* we think, what we *value*, how we *define terms* and *morals*, our *theology*, our *philosophies*: they *all* can be shaped, thanks to technology, by our *impatience*, by our resistance to waiting.

And so can our spirituality, our faith.

Knowingly or unknowingly, it's easy for us to transfer our expectations from culture to Christ.

For example, we pray for something – we ask God for something – in the morning, and we are upset when He doesn't deliver it to us by that same afternoon.

We submit our order to Him on Saturday and expect Him to have it ready for us to pick up at church on Sunday morning. Or better yet, we'll just park in the parking lot and maybe they'll have someone run it out to our car.

But of course, that doesn't happen. God just doesn't work that way, and so when He doesn't, we, intentionally or not, are tempted to question; we're tempted to doubt; we're tempted to think, "Hmmm – if Google can give us instant answers, why can't God?"

"If Amazon can deliver what we want next day, why doesn't God?"

"Maybe God isn't really there – or maybe He doesn't really care – since He hasn't responded to my request yet."

You see how it goes?

If we're not careful, we wind up turning God into some sort of personal assistant that, we feel, should keep pace with our society, and so it gets harder and harder for us to remember that God is not in retail. He's not there to cater to our every whim, desire and timeline.

Actually, He's there to *correct* things in us like impatience. In the way God deals with us, that is what He's doing.

And it's such a necessary spiritual surgery.

I wonder if more and more people – young people in particular – are in mental health counseling today because they're so culturally influenced, and they just don't know what to do. And so they fall apart anytime they can't have what they want when they want it. They come unglued because they simply don't know how to wait.

I wonder if the real source of conflict between many people today – between couples, between parents and kids, between friends – is that they fully expect that they should get what they want when they want it. They've become so culturally conditioned, because of what our society presents as true and possible, they can't even see that there's no such thing as a marriage or family or friendship where "everyone immediately gets their own way."

I also wonder if more and more people are drifting away from faith, from church and from God these days simply because they have no room in their lives for a God

who does not just give them what they want, when they want it.

They have neither time for nor interest in a God who has the audacity to ask people to give up not only their own timelines, their own "whens," but a God who even asks people to give up their own preferences, their own "wants," for His sake and for the sake of other people.

You see, our over-commercialized, instantly gratifying, self-exalting culture plays to our fallen nature. And it is affecting us more than we know – to the point that we find it...so incredibly...irritating...to be asked to...wait...for...anything.

Even when God is the one who is asking.

So, why does God put us in a holding pattern from time to time? Why does God ask us to wait?

This past Wednesday night, Janis Riffell offered some devotional thoughts at Prayer Meeting about why God allows *suffering* in our lives.

A lot of the same reasons apply to why God asks us to wait.

Sometimes He asks us to wait *so that we might be able to engage with and relate to others*.

You see, in spite of what we often think, God is a people-first person. He loves us. He loves people more than we understand, and so it upsets Him when people run over people in order to accomplish tasks – and especially so when *His* people, followers of Jesus, run over other people and treat people poorly or unfairly in order to get what we want.

I think God often stops us in what we call our *progress*, so that we can *see* and *engage* with *people*, as He sees and engages with people. One reason He puts us on the shelf from time to time is *to remind us that people are what's most important to Him*.

God also causes us to have to wait, sometimes, *for our own protection*.

How many times in your life has God said to you, "Not now?"

That can be so frustrating in the moment, but as time passes, we come to see that if He'd let us do as we wanted, we would have harmed ourselves – and maybe others.

There are reasons God says to wait for marriage to get into sexual relationships.

There are reasons God says to wait for the counsel of others before jumping into things.

There are reasons God says to put business and commerce off for a day and take a day of rest.

For me, it has happened in relationships, in job decisions, in financial decisions, in buying this or that. It takes time to realize it, but over and over again, God saved me great pain by making me, telling me, to wait.

I'm sure that's true for you, too – you can think of those times.

And you know, for every time we know of, there are likely dozens more that we aren't aware of. We don't yet realize from what all God has saved us, simply by either asking us or forcing us to wait.

He asks us to wait for our own protection and for the protection of others.

Other times, God asks us to wait *in order to strengthen our faith in Him*.

You see, when we can make something happen *ourselves*, in our *own* power, but God says, *instead*, to let *Him* make it happen, that's *God asking us to choose to trust*—to trust in Him and to let Him prove Himself powerful and faithful in our lives.

No matter what we might do, we will never do it better than God can do it, and it takes faith to believe that—and it takes more faith when we have the talent or the money or the power, ourselves, to act.

God knows we need to wait on Him sometimes, in order to keep our faith strong.

Sometimes God asks us to wait *to help us relate with Him*.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*.

Kairos means the right or opportune moment.

Chronos refers to chronological or sequential time.

Kairos has to do with quality: a period or season, the right time. It deals in moments.

Chronos is more quantitative, and it deals in days, hours, minutes and seconds.

Generally speaking, God operates according to *kairos*. He does things when the time is right.

Generally speaking, we operate by *chronos*—we do things according to our calendars.

It's not that *kairos* is good and *chronos* is bad, or vice versa—not at all. God set the world up to run on *chronos*; there would be chaos without it.

But God also wants His people to recognize the rightness of certain times outside of our clocks—and to do that, we have to hear from His Spirit. We have to be in tune with God's timing, which we cannot do apart from a close, ongoing relationship with Him, you see?

So, to move us to communicate with Him in a deeper way, God asks us to wait, in certain instances, for the right time—*kairos*. The right season to do something: to move, to begin a relationship, to make a job change, to start a business or hobby.

In the Scripture that was read this morning, it's about waiting for the right time to be with Jesus forever. *"When everything is ready,"* Jesus says, *"I'll return. I'll come and get you and take you to be with me where I am."*

When will that be? There's been lots of discussion and disagreement about that. People, for ages, have tried to figure it out to the day, minute and second—*chronos* time.

But this is about the right moment, you see, when the time is right, and this is determined by God the Father.

And until that time, we have to wait. No matter how much money we have, we can't buy a plane ticket to get to where Jesus is. We have no choice but to wait for God to determine when the time is right, no matter how badly we want to go today, no matter how hard the suffering becomes for us, as Jesus knew it would—not just for His first disciples, but for all His followers.

That's why He's telling them this. *"Times will get hard for you, but at the right time, you will come to be with me."*

Ours is not to know the precise time. Ours is to trust until the time is right. That's how God works with His people, and *waiting is one of His most effective tools to help us to know Him*.

And that brings us to the last reason I'll mention about why God sometimes has us wait: it is *to remind us that He is God and He knows best*.

We think we need to know so much—so many details about today and tomorrow and what they hold.

And there's nothing wrong with knowing things.

The problem comes when knowing becomes our idol, when we demand to know why God does this, why He doesn't, why He asks this or that, why we have to wait.

Have you ever noticed that the more demanding we get and the more urgent things seem to us, the more God tends to ask us to wait?

When we get all up in God's face about whatever in our lives, *that's* when He starts pushing the pause button.

In my life anyway, when I've gotten so far ahead of God that I don't even hear His voice anymore, really, that's when He tells me I have to wait. Sometimes I think He forces me to wait: I get sick, things fall apart.

He pushes me to the sideline, not out of punishment but out of love, so that through waiting I'll return to Him and regain perspective, and I'll concern myself with the right moment and not so much the right hour or second.

We think we need to know so much about timing, but really, all we need to know is that we can trust Jesus.

In knowing Him we may not know the details we want to know, but in knowing Jesus we know enough.

And that's what trust is.

Listen, if God has you in a holding pattern—if He's asking you to wait for Him, He's doing it for your own good, your own protection, your own faith—for the sake of your relationship with Him.

He wants us to trust Him for the moment—the right moment.

Don't be frustrated.

Don't be pushy.

Don't be demanding.

Don't be impatient.

Good things come, from God, to those who wait—they really do.

Will you trust Him with time—your time—His timing?

Will you let Him order, not just your hours, but your moments?

That's what He wants to know today.

Closing Song: *Be Still My Soul*

Benediction:

People who don't like to wait so much they're even frustrated by a sermon on waiting.

Push back against our know-everything, instant gratification, me-centered culture. Learn something about waiting. Become a waiter—one who waits on God.